

Romsey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134945
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	316296
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jo Curd

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janice Phippen
Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Hutson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Plaza Parade Winchester Road Romsey SO51 8JA
Telephone number	01794 512362
Fax number	01794 513048

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This new primary school is an amalgamation of previously separate infant and junior schools. Although the school started in September 2006, its permanent building is not yet complete. The schools continued on their previous sites up until the second half of last summer term, when the juniors moved to temporary accommodation on the infant school site. New buildings for the primary school are due for completion in April 2008. Pupils come from a mixture of private and local authority housing. A small proportion is from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small percentage has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is in line with the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school has undergone considerable changes and challenges over the past year. It currently provides a satisfactory standard of education for all its pupils. Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are well behaved, considerate and polite. Parents expressed their views saying 'A fantastic school. Staff have had to cope with a huge amount of change and upheaval in a short space of time' and 'I am struck on a daily basis by the atmosphere of happy, calm purposefulness one encounters in the school.'

Last year proved to be a very challenging first year for the school. Most of it was spent on two separate sites over half a mile from each other. Communication was difficult and existing systems and procedures were not easily compatible. There were many challenges to staff at all levels. Some staff, including senior leaders and managers were new, and there was high staff turnover largely due to personal reasons and sick leave. The headteacher spent considerable time reacting to challenges rather than developing provision. Governors and local authority (LA) advisers have provided good levels of support and challenge, for example, in improving the curriculum. The assistant headteacher for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 quickly identified weaknesses in provision in the Foundation Stage and effectively tackled these. Provision here is now good.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are below average. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average. Children enter the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below those expected for this age. They get off to a good start and achieve well. Senior leaders have begun to tackle recent variations in the rate of progress between classes and their actions have begun to bear fruit. Achievement is now satisfactory overall.

Many challenges continued over the year. Several initiatives to improve the school did not begin until the summer term when the school combined in temporary accommodation on the infant school site. With support of the LA and governors there have been several developments since then. Communication has improved and staff are slowly developing a shared vision for the school. Morale is currently good. Appointments of new staff, training and early initiatives in the curriculum have contributed to improvements in teaching and learning. Although teaching and learning are currently satisfactory, assessments are not always used sufficiently well in planning and work is not always well matched to individual needs. Systems for monitoring and evaluation, including self evaluation, are developing but are not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure thorough improvement. Leadership, management and capacity for further improvement are satisfactory.

Most pupils enjoy school and are very enthusiastic about it. They are keen to take responsibility and contribute well to their school community through the school council, caring for others in the playground and raising money for charity. They are well aware of how to lead healthy lives through eating fruit and vegetables, drinking water and taking exercise. They know how to stay safe. Because of their good behaviour, care for others and satisfactory progress in learning they are adequately prepared for the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Improvements in the leadership of the Foundation Stage have brought about significant improvements in this area. The Reception and Nursery classes work well together and provision

is now good. Teaching and learning are good overall, although the quality of these is less well developed in the Nursery than the Reception class. Children enter the Nursery with knowledge, skills and understanding below expectations for this age. They all achieve well because of the wide range of interesting engaging activities within the well-planned curriculum, largely effective staff interaction and the good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. At the end of the Foundation Stage last year, standards were broadly in line with national expectations and children were well prepared for the next steps of learning. Accommodation, including a spacious outdoor area and communal corridor area, is used well. A wide range of attractive engaging resources contributes well to children's learning and enjoyment, even though some are rather worn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement.
- Improve systems for monitoring and evaluation, including rigorous self-evaluation, so that they are well focussed on school development.
- Improve the use of assessment data to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement last year was variable. Due to effective teaching and learning, it was good in the Foundation Stage and Year 6 and satisfactory overall. Standards were below the national average at the end of Year 2 and broadly in line with the national average at the end of Year 6. Variations in achievement in and between classes are largely linked to an uneven quality of teaching and learning and turbulence of staff and pupils throughout the school. Action has been taken to improve these. Lesson observations, discussions and analysis of work shows that achievement is currently at least satisfactory and that standards throughout the school are rising. New intervention programmes and support groups for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are contributing to the satisfactory progress of these pupils. Pupils who have English as an additional language make similar rates of progress to their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils are happy and enjoy being at school. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils are caring, considerate and polite. Although a small minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour, this is generally good. Some boisterous behaviour in the playground, particularly from older boys, is generally corrected quickly and successfully. Younger pupils, for example, responded immediately to the headteacher's request to settle and sit quietly in assembly. Older pupils entered silently and sat attentively throughout. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils speak positively of special days, visits and visitors such as the police and fire safety officers who successfully help them learn to stay safe. Pupils contribute well to their school and community and are adequately prepared for later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inconsistent teaching and learning last year contributed to uneven but satisfactory achievement across the school. Lesson observations, work in books and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that presentation, marking and the use of targets are improving and that teaching and learning are currently at least satisfactory throughout the school. This is enabling all the pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities or English as an additional language, to make satisfactory progress. Strengths lie in relationships, pace, focus, behaviour and work in small groups around the school. Assessments of pupils' understanding and skills however, are not always used sufficiently well and work is not always well matched to individual needs. Whilst assistants often teach small groups well, they are often underused in introductions to lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is currently being reorganised to improve its effectiveness and coherence within this new school. Most improvements are at very early stages of development and are not yet embedded. Considerable input and support from the LA in mathematics is gradually improving the curriculum. A new approach to literacy, 'Read, Write, Inc', has been introduced this year. Whilst this is already having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and enjoyment, it is too early to ascertain its effect on achievement. The curriculum is enriched well through special days such as a 'Chinese Day' and 'French Day', a range of visits and visitors and extra curricular clubs. The diversity of this enrichment contributes well to social cohesion. Growing links with secondary schools and local colleges contribute well to the curriculum, for example in supporting the teaching of French from Years 1 to 6 and in provision for physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All the pupils are cared for well. The school works closely with vulnerable families. One parent spoke highly of the support she had received, saying 'I could not have been happier anywhere. Romsey Primary School has been supportive and understanding.' Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are in place. Support for pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are enjoying and benefiting from a range of new groups and programmes specifically designed to meet their needs. Statements and individual educational programmes are sufficiently in place. Although guidance for learning is inconsistent, it is satisfactory overall. Some pupils speak positively about how targets for learning help them, whilst others know that marking praises work but are not always sure of how it helps them move forward.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Last year proved a very challenging year for all the staff, especially leaders and managers. Practical and personnel demands contributed to the fact that the headteacher spent more time in reacting to events than developing and implementing systems. Improvements in provision

have been slower than expected and have required considerable support from the Local Authority and Governors. Many initiatives were not started until the summer term. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are therefore at an early stage of development. Although they are beginning to bring results, for example, in raising the quality of teaching and learning, they are not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all pupils achieve as much as they are able to. Several subject leaders are new to their roles and are benefiting from external support and training.

Although staff and governors have a strong commitment to the success of all pupils, equality of opportunity has been limited by variations in achievement. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They support the school well and successfully take their role of 'critical friend' in challenging and holding the school to account for improvements.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Romsey Primary School, Romsey, SO51 8JA

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. All the things you told us about your school helped us to do our work and to understand your school better.

We think that your school is satisfactory. There are some good things about it and things that could be better. We were pleased to hear from you that most of you enjoy school and are happy to come. Although some of your parents were a bit concerned about behaviour, we found this to be good. You are caring, confident and polite. You are all looked after well. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start. All aspects of the school, including teaching, learning, achievement and leadership are satisfactory.

We have asked your head teacher and teachers to do three things to make your school better. They are to:

- ensure that you all learn well
- improve the way you, parents, governors and staff think carefully about the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to develop these
- improve the way teachers use assessments to plan work suitable for your different learning needs.

Perhaps you could help by telling your head teacher or teachers what you do and don't like about the school, how you think it could be better and about things that do or don't help you in your learning.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes for the future to you and your families.

Jo Curd

Lead inspector